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RHYMES



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Donald Cary Williams



San Encino de Los Angeles

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*Presumptuously
(and all reverence is presumption)
to the kindest
and most conscientious
of objectors*



PREFACE

Then spak a stallwart courtieoure, Sir Hudibras the Hum-drum, un-to the Kynge sayenge Beholde, my Lord, howe greeuously thow has splitted thyn infnytyve. But the Kynge made ansuere Sirra, if it lyketh thee not then canst thow lumpe it. And on that same day Sir Hudibras perysshed by the Kynges rede.

—Kynge Cnut XXIV:14.

WHEN an otherwise reputable person falls a victim to the justifiably discouraged but incorrigible passion for torturing into some sort of verbal shape those inmost psychoses which a decent respect for the opinion of mankind should impel him to conceal—and not only that—but publishes them where even he who runs a delicatessen store may read, he is doomed to suffer the mingled misgivings of a fond father who flings his children to the wolves from sheer pride of authorship—and for the sake of that anomalous appreciation which even a wolf can offer.

This small book, however—thus-far gentle reader—is not, in the strict sense of the word, being ‘published’. A few copies are being ‘printed’, primarily for my own dark satisfaction; and—a poor second—for the doubtful benefit of a handful of choice spirits either so charitable by nature, or so hardened to immunity by a certain amount of unavoidable association with the author, that with one eye on the admonitory ex-



tract at the head of this 'preface', and with their fingers crossed, they can at least refrain from what I would prefer to regard as the shallowness of a criticism of what they are incapable of comprehending.

One peculiarity the earlier of the following verses exhibit for which some apology would perhaps not be out of order. That peculiarity consists in the alternate and seemingly indiscriminate use of the two forms of the second person singular pronoun—*thou* and *you*—both forms sometimes occurring within a few lines of one another. A moment's thought, however, will at once banish whatever reasonless prejudice may exist against this seeming inconsistency.

In no other case, certainly, does the use by an author of one word for an object debar him from use, on the same page, of another word for that same object. And within a single sentence the nice connotations intended may so change as to render the substitution of the strange reverential intimacy of the "*thou*" for the engaging commonplaceness of "*you*" an unanalyzable aid to the depicting of the ephemeral delicacies that are at the subtle heart of a single simplest emotion.

As a matter of fact, the majority of the verses contributing to the case in point may be reduced to pronominal uniformity, as it were, without interfering with rhyme or rhythm, and if any of my few but highly intelligent readers care to go to the trouble, they are at perfect liberty to make adjustments to suit themselves.

CALDARAZON



CALDARAZON

CALDARAZON swims in a great emptiness on the thither side of space, so that when one stands by night on the black quartz shore he sees no sky glamorous with lance-pricks of stars. But a little foggy smudge of light—like lamplight on a wisp of smoke—glimmers above the frozen shoulders of the sea-creeping hills of Dorn. That is the Universe.

If dwellers on Caldarazon could see the Earth, men say, they would see it acrawl with the lizard-things of fifteen millions of years ago, for so long a time does it take light itself to climb across the abyss. Yet every night a thousand millions of men's souls leap that immensity, and return again.

Caldarazon is the land of Dream, and thither go men's spirits on the strange errands of sleep. Sometimes willingly, sometimes unwilling and shrieking, men's souls wander Caldarazon while their still bodies breathe slowly, fifteen million light-years away.

Every man knows Caldarazon, the beauty and the horror of her—the cold precipice above the sea whence one may fall and fall, interminably—the eerie forests where nameless, shapeless beasts await to creep and leap, the ice-steep hills of Dorn where dizzy climbers strive to scream with soundless throats—the dark without reason and the light that comes no-whence.

I too know Caldarazon, but not as you.



I was born among the gray rushes where
the Seurth Brook seeps seaward thru the
stones of Ythra-Bel's ruined palace. I am
the last of my people. Daylong I sleep,
and as you dream of Caldarazon I dream
myself on earth.

Thus am I different from other men, and
forever strange to the ways of their world.

Some day I shall wake, and lie upon the
smooth black quartz and watch the smooth
black sea, while the sourceless daylight of
Caldarazon fans fiercer over Dorn. And I
shall be very courteous to far-faring souls
who befall that way.



I.

HERE BEGINS THE
F I R S T P A R T
OF THESE RHYMES

ὅτε ἡμην νήπιος

R h y m e s (i)

THE DAWN-SONG OF THE 4-6-2

HERE, ere the far dawn brighten, now,
ere the death of dark,
Look! and the steel ways whiten, silver
and cold. And hark!

Now in the valleys hollow, high on the hills
along,
Thunders attend and follow her and her
worship song.

A black and a brutish vision, a leaping lance of
light,
Upon her Master's mission, she hymns to Man
tonight!

Wan wraiths of wan religion, pale gods of
mist of mind,
They've flown their fleetest pigeon, the birds
I leave behind.

(The platforms clang behind me, and steam
grinds steel to steel.
The whooping shadows blind me, the tangled
switches reel!)

And finer, fleeter, faster, who swoop from
sea to sea,
I hymn to Man, my Master, to Man who
madeth me!

(The groaning gradient eases, the coaches
lunge and lift . . .
O birds upon the breezes, what know ye half
so swift!)

No doubtful path he gave me. In blackness
blind I roar,
But stayed to guide and save me, the metals
fade before,

And firm on straining lever and keen on rip-
pling ties,
The Man, my master ever, my Maker's hand
and eyes.

A breath of acrid burning, a wisp of vapor
wreath—
Three thousand horse are spurning the rails
that scream beneath.

The leaping pilot lurches, a mist of spume
and spark,
The questing headlight searches, a fissure
down the dark.

The moaning metal screaming, the fright-
ened shadows flee;
The muffled miles astreaming are things
that used to be!

And I the reeking wonder of flaming flange
and wheel,
The red and roaring thunder, of mist and
fire and steel,

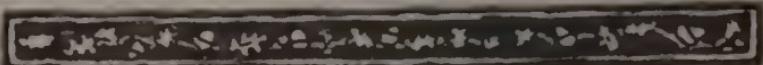
A panting, sentient being, a blaze with
brains and breath,
I owe to Man my freeing from darkness
worse than death.

A stone I was, and hidden, a metal, shape-
less, dead,
Who now have raced and ridden the wings
of the morning red.

Three thousand miles before me, a thousand
lives behind,
I sing the Brain that bore me, the Master
and the Mind;

*And now the dawn is glowing, and now the
stars are dim,
The gray-lit miles aflowing, I race the sun
for Him.*





HAWKER

(With poignant artistic regret the author must here admit that the intrepid transatlantic flyer whose heroic death is celebrated in the following was eventually rescued in an—esthetically speaking—disappointing state of unimpaired vitality.)

THE gray land dipped behind him,
The ocean gleamed before.
The wind rose up to bind him,
And the angry ocean floor
Sent sudden mists to blind him
And hidden waves to roar.

A footless, eyeless swallow
He skimmed the cloudy aisles,
The sightless, soundless hollow
Where the sunlight never smiles,
But clammy cloud-things follow
For twice a thousand miles.

He gave the waves below him
His moulted landing gear
That never an isle might know him
Of all the waters drear
Till Ireland's sunrise show him
Her emerald coasts were near.

We know not when nor whither
The darkness whelmed his prow.
We know that God was thither
Ere Hawker passed, and now
We know no wave can wither
The bays upon his brow.

But once I dreamed a vision
 Of a greater gull that flew
Adown the dim derision
 Of the sunlight and the dew.
He eyed a vaster mission—
 And the fog bank let him thru.

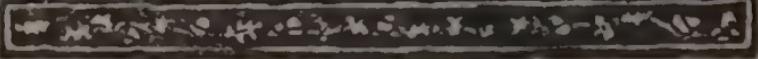
Perhaps, beyond the Portal
 And the cloudy curtains drawn,
Thru a cloudless sky, immortal,
 O'er a lonely, level lawn,
His singing engines hurtle
 And his wings beat up the dawn.

R e q u i e m

When the last great trumpet sounds, O Lord,
 And the hosts of the dead arise,
And the Angel stands with the flaming
 sword,
Thy Guide to Paradise,

And the timid folk to his garment cling
 To tread the heaven ways
Where the great stars sweep and the comets
 swing
And the drifting darkness sways—

Oh, give him his planes—his planes,—dear
 God—
His motors pounding free,
And the trackless spaces where Thou hast
 trod,
And he will come to Thee.



SPRING

(Occidental College, March 1919)

S WELLING circlet of emerald hills
Cupping the heavens to north and
south,
Earth's sweet lips that the sunlight
thrills,
Kissing the spring on her dew-wet mouth.

Color that hurts us, a glory of green,
Splotched with poppies and purple plume;
Sun-soaked hollows slashed between,
Blazing, a riot of burnished bloom;

Breezes asplatter with yellow surf
Drive it in spindrift down the grass,
Bubbles of foam on the scented turf,
Shimmering splashes of molten brass!

Perfumed tang of the wizened bush,
Writhing and gray from the cactus beds,
Mingles with scent of the flowers that push
Out of the grasses their cool young heads.

*The blue warm veil of the skyline droops.
Earth's blind face to the southward seeks,
Lips half-parted; the sunlight stoops,
Kisses the spring on her dew-wet cheeks.*



THE DARK DISTANCE

SUNLIGHT, and the shadows in thy hair—

Yea, thine earth is fair:
Gold and rose and green,
And the vast warm arch aloft,
Blue sky, thy sky—a soft
And a merciful screen.

But what of the night, O Maid ?
Eternal and infinite shade,
Dread depths and trembling star
Where the hush'd black spaces are.
Shaken, and dazed, afraid—
Ah, God ! I see so far !

SAGESSE OBLIGE

TO them of deeper vision,
Who know the dark is Night,
To them, their songs, the mission
To keep the Lie alight.

They know its hopes are hollow,
They know our loves are dust,
But blind, we smile and follow.
They pity, keep the trust.



LAMA SABACHTHANI

A

CRY from the dark; you hear it.
A pain that you always knew.
But never your hand comes near it,
Never a voice from you.

You gave us the earth and sorrow.
You left us here to die:
Blood now, and hell tomorrow,
The Cross, and a snivelled Lie;

Dead space and chance-born maggots
That twist and writhe and crawl,
Heaping your hell-fire fagots,
Binding your church's pall.

A cry from the dark; your peoples
Call for your aid tonight.
Their crazy, cross-crowned steeples
Grope for the promised light.

And lo! and our God is mightless,
And the Crown on his perjured
head!
Never the sky so lightless,
Never the hope so dead.

We call, and he cannot listen.
The God that ye gave is gone.
Only, the planets glisten,
Only, the earth rolls on.

ONE OF THE THREE HUNDRED
of Long Beach Polytechnic High School
In the Argonne

THE death of the day that tinges
The cliffs and the clouds and
thee,
My land where the sunset singes
To mauve on the marge of the sea,
With the gold of the gloaming fringes
The folds of the Flag for me.

O land of the spring! O my land,
Where I and the Spring were born!
The breath of the brush on the highland,
The scent of the sage and the thorn,
The dusk of the dreaming Island,
Adrift on the mist at morn!

To thee here our Sacrifice rather,
To thee, and their Standard furls:
The green where the breakers lather
The coast where the comber curls,
The gold where the glad winds gather
The laughter of gladder girls.

Here, where the vanguard dozes,
Ere dawn and the death and the cold,
We slept, and the Crimson closes,
The Argent and Azure fold
In dreams of the Realm of the Roses,
In gleams of the Green and the Gold.



THE LAST REVIEW

Occidental Student Army Training Corps
December 10, 1918

EYES to the front and heads proud-high,
Silent and sullen our ranks rolled by,
Olive and drab from the sunset sky,
We, that they summoned to battle
and die

Where the gray clouds smother and the
lightnings fly
And America sweeps to the Rhine!
“Squads left!”—and the clockwork columns
clung,
Tangled and swayed till the last file swung,
Wavered and wobbled and tightened and
flung
A locked and levelled line.

We that they taught of the battle shout,
The laden hush of the cramped redoubt,
The breathless pause ere the trench spew out
Its mud-smeared burden to swell the rout

And the steel-pronged barriers yield—
Our dreams of the rifle and bristling blade,
Our dreams of barrage and the barricade,
Our dreams of a manhood unafraid,
The gleams of our glory glimmer and fade
To the sane, safe march of a preened parade
Of boys, on a football field.

“Victory”—yea, and heads held high,
Silent and sullen our ranks rolled by,
Olive and drab from the sunset sky;

We that they summoned to battle and die
Where the red clouds hover and the shrap-
nel fly,
Men in a world of men.
Tomorrow we're laying our rifles away,
We that they summoned to struggle and
slay
Where the wild world quivers and the
heavens sway
And the red-rimmed thunders stoop for prey.
We are marching our last in the ranks
today . . .
Tomorrow we're boys again.

EVENING ON STANISLAUS

IS it dusk that has come so slowly?
Is it night whose standards sweep
Over the west hills, lowly,
Night, and the dark, and sleep?

Dusk; and the breath of the breezes
Faints on the pulseless air.
Hush—while the tired earth eases
The coils of her dusty hair.

The worn and the warm world waiting
The cool of the night to come,
Her bare brown breast pulsating,
Her great hot lips are dumb.

"BOB" LAFOLLETTE—1917

WHAT talk ye of traitors and treason?
Banners that once I bore
Mean what they meant before.
Can "raving" that once was reason
Turn at the touch of War?

My Banner that bright from the dawning
Flaunted its field of snow
Only a summer ago
Ye fled to, followed, and fawning,
Fought from the night to know.

My Banner that rallied your legions,
Aweary, ahunger, athirst,
Marshalled our ranks, dispersed
The clouds from our younger regions
Ere that the storm had burst;

Gave back to your children their fathers,
Peace, and a friendly sky—
Faint when the war was nigh,
Ye fled, and the storm wrack gathers,
Fled at the battle cry!

What talk ye of cowards or cravens?
Fear and the Flight and Flame,
I stood to my Dream the same.
What reck I the wrath of ravens
That gloat on my glory-shame!



MOTHERS' SONS

"As the 'conscientious objectors' were marched by to the prison, they were followed and scoffed at by an indignant crowd of patriots. One woman said, 'I pray God their mothers may not see them now!'" —Daily Paper, during the War for England and France.

BEHIND their backs the barrier clangs.

The gaping crowds go 'way.

The swollen State has closed her fangs

Above her meat today.

They would not bow where your banner hangs

Nor aid your servants slay.

The people spat as they led them past,

That shuffling hero line

Of men that held their honor fast

Tho' conscript cravens whine

And a mother shouts at the halting last,

"Thank God, no sons o' mine!"

That night she dreamed ere morning broke,
And other, elder Mothers spoke.

Katherine Huss

I turned my eyes from that dread place.

I could not bear the sight,

The white smoke curled about his face,

His lips all stern and white.

His spirit is damned by bock and bell.

His ashes drift to sea.

The Church ha' haled his soul to hell—
Thank God, he were son o' me!

M a r g a r e t L u t h e r

Methinks that someone shouted
Where my son, my son had passed.
Thru the priestly droves he flouted,
Thru the commoners aghast
He passed, and never doubted
Of a martyr's crown at last.

His holy books were seizen
As false to Church and State.
He stood to them to reason
The harried spirit's fate.
They tried my son for treason.
I know my son was great.

And lo, ten thousand churches
Bear his name above the door.
No bloated Bishop lurches
Thru the village any more.
I think no treason smirches
The son, the son I bore!

M a r y W a s h i n g t o n

I saw your proud eyes darken
At the bitter words they flung.
And yet I smiled to hearken
To the "craven" on their tongue.

For had you lost, that cattle
Had dubbed you "traitor" too.
Because you won the battle,
A people worships you.



ORTHODOXY

Ye who never knew the Wrath,
The madness rose from hell;
Ye who tread the pansy path,
And like it well;

Ye who cry when ye are burnt,
And sanely shun the fire;
Ye whose souls have never learnt
The wild Desire;

Ye whose souls are milk and cream,
Whose minds are coined in dies;
Ye whose spirits never scream
To smothered skies;

Ye whose questing visions stand
And cease where highways halt;
Ye whose longings never fanned
Insane revolt;

Ye who love the Moral Laws,
Whose passions never long
To sin, and sin because
Ye know it wrong;

Ye who hide the sullen blow,
And wreath the naked sword,
Ye who shame can never know
Sathanas lord!



GERMANIA

GREASY smoke and gray,
Here where the shadows sway;
White face and torn gold hair
Swirl thru the murky day;
Wild bursts of music flare
And sob themselves away.

Chill-swung steel, and song
Iron-cold, nor right nor wrong;
Black mists and clinging smoke,
Her thunders crash along;
Cleft cloud and ruddy stroke,
Rhythmic, thunder-strong.

White bodies, naked, torn,
Wild eyes and sorrow-worn;
Red wrath and wreck and rue;
Red nations, broken, born;
And she is a mother, too,
Tho' shamed sisters mourn.

Red fruit, but redder seed,
Gold and gain and greed,
Clasped hands and haloed brow,
Smug smirks from lips that bleed,
Drive dear your virtues now—
Cry your Christ indeed!

Scourged from your slavish sea,
Bruised to her battered knee,
No Book she flaunts, nor Palm;
Facing the planet she,
Tearless, cruel, and calm—
Just Germany.



• • • • •

Ringed by the wolves of half the earth,
Her gray lips set on her chilly mirth,
 Beautiful, desperate, bold, at bay,
Her tired white hand on her sword hilt lay.

The crispèd curls from her eyes she swept,
And gazed where her gray-green legions
 slept
 The Sleep that has no waking.
And the helmet plume on her drooping head
Dipped to the toll of the new-made dead
 Her thunder-guns were taking.

Ringed by the gloom of the old world night,
Her white face set in the murky light,
 And beautiful, desperate, cold, and gray,
Victorious, defiant, her legions lay.





PRUSSIA

A GRAY iron race from the cold star
 spaces,
 Caged by a bungling birth
With cold vast dreams of the dead
 dawn places
On pitiful, puerile Earth,

From lone stern strife with the dread dark
 legions,
From worn war watch in the far night re-
 gions,

We came iron-armed in the grim god fashion
To long lied Hopes and your soft child pas-
 sion.

What know ye of the deep dim dirges
The sad stars sing in their ranked, slow
 surges?

The sweet swift swing of the raw glad bat-
 tle—

Ye weep that a child is slain?
A raw, red swath thru the fool fat cattle,
 And back to the night again!



FROM "THE DEFENSE OF GOD"

.

II.

O THOU who once wast ruler, hark.
For all the maiden souls that took
the dark
And sterile habit of thy cloisters,
lost
Their holy right to womanhood, the cost
Of thy cold favor; sacred smothered dreams
In virgin hearts that sank in dreadful
gleams
Of fleshless Love that bore nor fruit nor
seed
Save 'peace' and barren bliss that failed to
feed
The hungry hearts that could alone be stayed
From little toothless gums against the
breasts
That covered them, or youthful faces laid
With lips to lips and mingled breath, and
eyes
All wet with wonder—

" . . When women saw the shades
Of death dim hero eyes that shone for them
(And crisp warm hair wherein her hands
were used
To stray, all thick with blood, and lips all
bruised
And cold that once had pressed her gar-
ment's hem;)



When starving peoples, bleeding hearts, and
 deep
Dark utter agonized despair
Found voice in blinded faith that did not
 weep
But rose a vast long wail of praise and
 prayer
To thee, O God, who let them suffer so!
What sign gav'st thou thy people then to
 show
Thou wast a God of love and right? No
 blow,
Thou God, thou struck'st for them, no
 stricken girl
Thou saved'st from shame, no thunder didst
 thou hurl
To halt a million murders there that soaked
A thousand miles in blood; the pain that
 choked
The widow's breast thou couldst not stay.

“They fought
Thy battles! O poor blinded peoples, naught
Thou aidest them that bear thy banner; nay
Nor dost thou care. Their fevered prayers
 were vain
To win thy favor. Blood of martyrs slain
And cheated monkish hearts, and waves of
 fire
That purged rebellious hearts upon the pyre
That would not do thy honor—all were vain.

“O God, God, God, thou useless Dream,
 thou Lord
That couldst nor save nor slay, whose feeble
 sword

Was ever sheathed, who only drew'st thy
breath
Amid the incense smoke of broken sobs
From faithful hearts, thou God of shame
and death,
Behold, this whole vast throng of judgment
throbs
Its hatred here. Thou little God, and weak,
If still thou would'st that forfeit lordship,
speak!"

III.

.

"A dream—a dream—and poorly did ye
dream,
O ye my lordly Thinkers! Did ye deem
When that ye shaped me in your souls that
I,
A thought, could change the other thoughts
of fleet
And sad delight?

"Not mine the priestly yoke,
The penance cells, the pyre, nor did I cheat
Your hearts of bliss save when ye dreamed
me so. . . .

"Not true my Word that brings
The only solace that your dream world
knew?
Ah, no—it was but false—and naught is
true
Save ye. And I who stand and plead am
naught
But dear and dreadful dreams of yours, a
thought

Within your minds; and what I say is just
Your own defense within your hearts of
trust

That once ye held, and senseless sacred hope
That glazed the other horrors of your
dreams.

“ . . . I did not seem
To care? And yet the holy, foolish faith
Ye held in me was greater far than aid
Of thunderbolt or bright avenging blade.

• • • • •
“Your visions now are clear. No more ye
feel
Your throats all choked with worshipping, or
kneel
To pour your anguish at the feet of one
Whose glance was glory more than now ye
know
When ye are gods. Those tender dreams
have ceased
To be, ye say. They were not real; and yet
O ye that once have loved, do ye forget
How very sweet they were? Could they
then die,
Those dreams of God? The cruel cold creed
ye shun
Was priestly made, not mine; but what my
priest
Could never know your lovers knew. The
God
The cloisters could not teach their kisses
told;
And sovran Souls, in all your new-found
sway

O'er space and stars and flitting worlds, I
pray
Have yet ye found a joy half so sweet
As Love, your foolish former dream, to
greet
Your poor unbodied selves? Would ye not
give
Your majesty once more to live
With lordly dreams that were not true, but
oh,
So wondrous dear because ye dreamed them
so?
"E'en loneliness and weariness and hearts
Half-broken, numb with quiet, 'wilder'd pain,
With faith half-shaken e'en in love that
starts
The dumb still questions in the weary brain.
All listless longing, ashes left of love
That burned itself away in whimp'ring flame
To leave the dreary glimmers gray that
move
Across the hidden glow of angry shame
That cannot choose but love, all hopeless
still,
And dream of dreams it never can fulfill—
O Love, that never dies, the holy Lie,
The pain that bears its own dear anodyne,
The warm, wise, wistful throb of yearning,
shy
And lonely-sweet and pure and all divine. . .

"But no, ye cannot choose
But let me live. For take me from the sky
And ye are less of gods yourselves. For I
Am just the God in your own souls, my
Lords,

That shapes all love and life beyond the dry
And ashen emptiness that was ere words
Of yours had made the flow'rs and fanes of
earth

Ye cannot dream without me, Lords. A
dearth

Of beauty would oppress your souls. Ah no,
I am not true. I am a dream and so
I live within your hearts alone. Ye strive
To drive me forth? It cannot be. There
are

Nor earth nor man nor sky nor circling star
Withouten me. Ye could not dream alive
Your very selves, ye would but be a fog
Of blank existence had ye not the power
That ye corporify in me. Ye flog
Me from your hall; adown the dark ye
glower

Against my face; and still beneath one name
Or other ye had worshipped me, or passed
To darkness, powerless, inchoate, a flame
Of faded being—ghostly—gray—aghast!

“But first, and last, and always I am
Love,

A high and holy dream all dreams above—
A useless Thought, a Lie that may not give
A single certainty,—but still in gleam
Of mother eyes and silly love of maids
And trust and foolish faith—I live—I live.”

• • • • •
All gold and green the dawning glows. It
fades—

My Dream within a dream within a dream.

WHEN GOD WAS DEAD BEHIND US

WHEN God was dead behind us and you
 were God to me,
And I hurled the reeling planets thru
 the boundless starlight sea;

When I swung the swirling systems or
 cleared them with a breath,
While countless nations worshipped tho I
 flung the flaming death;

When the flare of a billion altars flecked the
 aching space
And I drove the cheerful comets on their
 heedless, happy race;

When you were the dusky goddess, queen
 of the Shadow land.
I yearned in my empty splendor for the
 warmth of your mortal hand.

And the dead space winds were chilly in
 that void between the suns,
Tho I was the God, your master, and Lord
 of the mighty ones.

• • • • •
And my Empire's dead behind me and you
 are dead to me,
For I left my flaming legions in the inky
 ether sea,
And my slavish stars are scornful, and the
 deadly depths between.

Their God is a prisoned spirit . . and you
are still—a Queen!

When the endless cycle wheels again
At the end of time,
And I take my crown from the senseless
thing,
The soulless Crime;

When I cleanse my skies of their burning
stain,
As I surely will,
Will I damn your soul to screaming pain
Or love you still?

APHROGENEIA

WHAT pangs the cold sea knew, O Love,
To give thy beauty birth.
(Oh, the foam below and thy breast
above,
Thy lips, and wistful mirth!)

For thou wast not, O Love, O sweet,
When Ocean bore thy bloom.
What tumult made her pulses beat
And shaped thee in her womb?

Ah, that were a gladless birth, O Love.
Her moaning lips still strain
For thine or a lover's lips above
Her vast and vacant pain.

A DEDICATION

I SENT my soul to wander
 Beyond the curtained mist,
To pierce the dimness yonder,
 The veils of cloud you kissed;

To see, beyond the borders
 Of scent or sound or sight,
The void where Nothing orders
 The nothing of the Night.

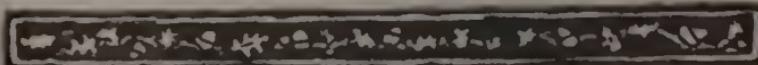
I crowned my brows with vision
 To bring to you the crown.
Because you scorned my mission
 I laid my godhead down,

To scale the dusky mountains
 And creep and cup the dew
Of foam of fairy fountains
 And bring the cup to you.

Wan realms beyond the River
 I stormed and brought you back
Great blooms of blood that quiver
 From waxen buds of black,

Or raped their bowers of rushes
 For wreaths of ghostly green
For you, O blaze and blushes,
 And crowned with curls my Queen!

And lest you die tomorrow,
 Who crushed from out my soul
These blood-foamed wines of sorrow,
 I bring you back the whole.



CREDIDI

O LITTLE Temple Keeper
Between the dark and dawn,
Guard deep, and clasp it deeper,
The Seal thy God laid on!

Because your soul was beauty,
Because your skies were white,
To you the dreadful duty
To guard the Flame tonight.

O Anthem hushed and hazy!
O Satrap to the God!
O star-souled, deathless Daisy,
Where the Purple Poppies nod!

O little Vestal Tender,
Watcher by the Flame!
Nor yours its silken splendor,
Nor yours to give nor blame.

And yours no careless Crowning,
Yours no barren gift,
With the ghastly Gates afrowning,
While the sleepless shadows shift.

To Him, not you, the Glory,
From Him your eyes and hair;
To Him the soft-sobbed Story,
To Him, who made you fair.

O Flowers upon the Altar,
To glimpse the Grace behind!
Ye mean too much to falter—
The Beauty wise and kind.

Thru you the God is weaving
The vastest, truest Trust,
The Proof of all Believing,
The Shrine behind the Dust!

And hair and throat and fingers,
The Vestal Flame is thine,
And oh! the Night still lingers,
O Keeper of the Shrine!

DONA FERENTIS

IN the cruel, sane day
I know my worth,
And yours I know,
O wonder and beauty of dusk and
snow,
On the waking earth
So far away!

But in the pitiful night
You're close . . . so near!
And rustling sweet in the dreamland light
Your patient glory passes,
And dreamy winds in the drowsy grasses
Drift your dusky ringlets clear.

Stars in your eyes in the grayness there,
Warmth of your breath on the tingling air
Where your face like a flower in the shadow
gleams,
The warm little clasp of those hands of
thine . . .
Are mine . . .
In dreams . . .



MADONNA MIA

WITH all the world a madness, one lone-
some, livid pain,
(Gray, tattered curtains drooping
thru a steaming crimson brain)
Would God I had the solace of my fathers'
Faith again!

Yea, I know Belief a falsehood, a cowardly
foolish thing,
But sweet your trusting worship where your
golden windows fling
Soft, rainbow-tinted glories down the shad-
ows of the wing,

The golden warm Madonnas asmoulder on
the glass
Athwart the scented Silence where the muf-
fled pinions pass,
Adown the rolling wonder and the music of
the Mass—

And soft upon the sorrow where his sweet-
est tortures smart.
O Mary, Virgin Mary! Canst thou take
another Part—
The Holy of the Holies of a foolish boyish
heart?

For dear your peaceful presence where your
pictured purples stain
The pageant of your worship thru the thun-
dering refrain,
But oh! I know thee nearer in a sweeter,
fairer Fane!

Did God then paint those crosses, dawn-gilt
and morning-cold?
Or rear yon stony altar, marble white and
dusky gold?
But He made the rosy Anguish where the
wings of Longing fold!

Is God behind the blackness where your sol-
emn censers swirl?
The music and the movement and the candle
flames acurl?
Is it wrong that when I worship I worship
just—a girl?

And thru the golden stillness from the
stained windows there,
And thru the softened shadows like a stilly
wisp of prayer . . .
Adown the filmy darkness—filmy whispers
of your hair?





OTHERWISE

I SOUGHT not the scent of your hair,
dear,
The lift of your lips for sign;
Only, I knew you were fair, dear,
Worshipped and wished you mine.

Not for your sob in the dark, dear,
Purple that dulls and dies;
Only the mist, and—hark, dear—
Promise that stars your eyes.

Only my fairy and friend, dear,
Laughter and lips and curls;
Only to have, nor to spend, dear,
Your russet, and rose, and pearls.

Is it wrong? Are they less? Are they
more, dear?
The gifts that you give to them?
The blushes and bliss you pour, dear?
The russet, the rose, and gem?

Is mine then more than a gift, dear,
The gifts in your eyes I sought?
The trust that should lean and lift, dear,
The hush from your hidden thought?

Yea, more than your breath or your kiss,
dear,
And all that your lips can do.
Only, remember you this, dear—
The Gift that I give to you!



"HELEN"

FRIEND that I hailed on the waters
When midnight sank on the sea,
Who, darling and dearest of daughters
Of men, came unto me;

Laid hand in my hand and watched by me
Thru dusk and the dark and the dawn;
Who daunted the dreads that defy me
Till twilight and terror were gone;

The smile in your eyes of a sadness
That means more than fairy or friend,
But Friend with a glory of gladness
Of beauty bereft of an end;

Your lips that have smiled as they quivered,
Your eyes, that have softened with tears;
Brave heart that stood by me and shivered
Not at unknowable fears;

We who have stood to the hisses
Of serpentine shapes of the shade—
How know I caresses or kisses,
Or thou, who art more than a maid?

And now tho in morning I miss you,
And grieve as your grieving I mark,
Yet how, O my Comrade!—how kiss you?
We Two, who have stood to the Dark!

“—BEFORE YOU KNEW”

SOMETIMES, amid the pain
 Of loving you,
I would I knew you less again,
 Before you knew.

Sometimes, when questions sting
 And answers smart,
I see the old cloud glories cling
 By thee, apart.

Sometimes, when idols fall,
 My starved lips curl;
I mind when thou wast All to all,
 A Goddess girl.

Sometimes, when human hope
 And longing mar
The worship where I used to grope
 And thee, my Star,

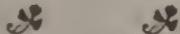
Sometimes, tho flesh is fair,
 The Holies pine
For days when thou wast Goddess
 there
 And they were thine.

*Sometimes, amid the pain
 Of loving you,
Would God I knew you less again,
 Who never knew.*

IN RED AND BLACK

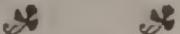
YOUR song in the golden morning,
The roses red on your dusky head,
Blood on blood adorning!

And swept by a surf of sobbing,
The grasses beat at your lovely feet,
The whole mad world athrobbing.



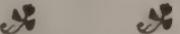
Gave I the Gods my naked soul,
To torture or to slay,
Think you the Gods would give the dole,
The girlish gift I pray?

Deem you, with blood to sate their lust,
The Gods would give me You?
But blood and souls are cheap as dust—
And Isabels so few!



Red lips and curls and breathing snow—
Oh, God! my darling . . . lest you know
The hells we feel, gray paths we go!

Vast purple poppies vaunt and veer—
Poison things. And star-souled, clear,
By their shadowed stems . a daisy, dear!



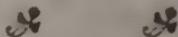
I know it for what it is:
Black flames in the smothered dark,
The hell of the shadow kiss,
Glare-white, and red, and stark.

I know It for what It is:
(Soft lights and shadows dim;
Blind eyes that lift to his—
To him!)

Red hopes on an ashen bier;
Dead stars, deep set, and mad—
And yet (I love you, dear,)
I'm glad!



Dumb, silent songs my broken soul might
sing,
Spoke it with spirit tongue
Where anguished wrongs their stifled voice
might fling
The voiceless veils are flung.



Softly the clay they fold,
The earth and the kindly mould,
The merciful dark, the cold . . .
Rest . while the stars grow old.

It's only the brain that's biting,
Only life that stings:
Gray years of madness, fighting
The passion things.

Cold fire like molten lead,
Cold fire that longing fed . . .
Now, and the fires are dead,
And dear, dark years ahead
Where the empty æons roll . . .
A kind and a dreamless bed . . .
The soul?
Thank—Fate, there is no soul!



FORGETTING

SPRING; green myst'ries that I knew;
Days rose-pearled, and wet
With humble tears; and you . . .
O God! Let me forget!

Spring; and soft, strange skies,
Unmapped, unguessed as yet;
Spring; and Promise in your eyes . . .
O God! Let me forget!

Spring; and the things you said,
Dream things I never met;
Gone, and the dreams are dead . . .
And now, let me forget!

Dusk; and the shadows fall;
Rose gleams; and now, Lord, let
The darkness drown them all.
Yea, God, let me forget.

They burn, those rose-rayed suns,
My poor blind soul . . . and yet . . .
Not now, O Sweet . . . but Once—
Oh, God! Lest I forget!





RECAPITULATION



LL that I had I have given.
All that I have I would give.
Always for you I have striven.
Only for you that I live.

Never I prayed for a guerdon,
Watching my arms by the sea,
Save that I lighten your burden,
Suffer thy sorrow for thee.

Bring they the tiniest sweetness,
Dreams that I lay at your feet,
Touch with a tenderer fleetness,
Sweeten your dreams more sweet?

Vain did I dream that a sorrow
Borne in the shadow alone
Helped thee in thine, or could borrow
Pain of your heart for my own?

Lips to the hem of your raiment,
Once you have listened, and hark:
That and the night were repayment—
That, and the infinite Dark.



THE SONG OF SONGS: WHICH IS SOLOMON'S

(As It Might Have Been Done)

BEHOLD, thou art fair, my love.
Behold, thou art very fair;
The folds of thy veil above
Thine eyes like the nestled dove,
And like unto fleece thine hair
Of flocks that graze on Gilead.

IV:1-3.

Thy teeth like the ewes new-shorn,
New-washed in the springs at morn,
And nuzzled by lambs twin-born.

Thy lips are a crimson thread
That limns thy lovely mouth;
And rosy as pomegranate rind
Thy temples gleam behind
The veil that wraps thy head. . .

VII:1-2.

O Daughter of Kings, how sweet
The tread of thy sandalled feet. . .

Thy body's shapely cup
Is magic with mingled wine;
Thy waist as a sheaf bound up
With lilies and poppy vine. . .

VII:5.

The splendors of Carmel lair
In thy tresses of purple hair,
And a King is a captive there!

"JOSEPH, THE HUSBAND OF MARY"

ONLY a girl, my God,
Mary, my maid, to me;
Her lips and her dimpled hand;
Ah, God, canst Thou understand?
What can she mean to Thee?

Mine only heaven, Lord;
Dusk and the dawn, and dew,
Roses, and twilight snow—
Ah, God, can You ever know?
What can she mean to You?

I knew not the angels, Lord,
But only a life of pain,
Of longing and love to live.
Ah, would that Thy Day could give
Mary, and night, again!

I too had my dreams, my Lord,
Dreams that I dreamed divine.
Oh, heart of our hearts, my Wife!
The warm little lilts of life . . .
Yea, for the dreams were Thine.

Souls Thou hast shown, O God,
Music of flower and flame,
And yearnings that drank more deep
Of sweetness that stirred, asleep;
Nay? and Thine Angel came.

Sainted, they say, my God?
Holy her heart, her eyes?
Oh, Mary, my maid! And yet,

Can lips that have loved forget,
Enthroned in the scented skies?

Nor Glory nor gold, O God,
Nor worship, nor Savior son,
Nor splendor of Thine can make
More holy her heart, or shake
The love that has made us one.

O Thou who art strong, and God!
Tho I am a man, and weak,
My desperate days have known
Her heart against my own,
Her cheek against my cheek.

• • • •

And lo! by the Throne, O God,
Her eyes are agleam with tears.
The glittering gates of gold,
The anthems of angels rolled
Are strange on her heart, and cold;
And glimmering space appears
A beckoning, friendly sea,
An ocean of fadeless foam,
With billows that flame and fall,
Whose trackless traverses call
Her home,
To me.





FRAGMENTS

A Prayer to Astarte

OGODDESS and Mother, Astarte,
The fires on thine altars are dim.
They kneel to another, Astarte,
And twine all their garlands for him.

Yet still by the portal, Astarte,
I bow in the shadows alone,
O only immortal, Astarte,
And wind thee a wreath of my own.

Thy mysteries slay me, Astarte.
I kneel where thy censers were,
But thou dost betray me, Astarte—
Thy last true worshipper.

The world is a madness, Astarte.
Thy temples are crazy with crime.
The shrines of thy gladness, Astarte,
Are crumbling in ruinous slime.

Thy mercy, thy pardon, Astarte,
O thou who alone art divine!
They roam in thy garden, Astarte,
And know not its blossoms for thine.

They dirty thy raiment, Astarte,
And soil all its white with a name.
And give for repayment, Astarte,
The spurious coinage of shame.

Oh, come with thy splendor, Astarte,
Thy womanly, wonderful blade—
Oh, hearken! and render, Astarte,
Thine aid!

O beauteous, blind Astarte, O longing and
love that are God!

Pardon the ways we have trod,
Kneeling austere at an altar straitened with
justice, and stark;
Goddess of whispers that falter, Goddess of
tears in the dark,
Astarte, oh, hark!

Compassionate, kind Astarte,—thou timid,
with tremulous lips,
Mistress of magic that slips
Over the earth in the Maytime, making for
maidens the eyes
Bright with the pleasures of playtime sweet-
er with sacred surprise;

O loveliness, life—Astarte—O Love that is
human and blind,
Murmurs that mean to be kind,
Yearning that gropingly blesses its pitiful
efforts to aid,
Whispers and wistful caresses, and tender-
ness timid, afraid;

O Goddess, O glad Astarte, O thou in the
heart of the maid,
Crumpled and holy and laid
Warm in the arms of her lover, a frail little
figure that clings—
Quavering kisses that cover a longing for
lovelier things—

And holiest, last . . Astarte . . the mouth
of a miracle pressed
Soft to a heaven of breast,
Fat little fingers that furrow all pinkly a
bosom of white,
Babyish eyes that burrow blinking away
from the light.

A woman—a wonder—Astarte—a comrade—
Creatrix—and queen,
Not dimly a deity seen,
Nor dreadful with dooming decision, nor aw-
ful, omnipotent grace,
But lovely, a virginal vision, and trembling,
with tears on your face.

O friendly and futile, Astarte—O helpless
and holy and great!
O feeble,—and stronger than Fate!
Our hearts are as altars before you, our
souls as a sacrifice burn.
Oh, help us be fit to adore you—oh, let us
be pure, in return!



II.

HERE BEGINS THE
SECOND PART
OF THESE RHYMES

R h y m e s (ii)

KRINIR YAR KRONE

SLIDING aslant of the blaze of stars
The triple moonlets swung.
You were the Queen of the southern
lands,
The Krône Canal and the Scarlet Sands,
And I was the Lord of the north of Mars
When Northern Mars was young.

The deserts were dappled with drifting flare,
The waters had hidden their face.
Mid Martian shout and Jovian yell
The flaming flail of the fire-beam fell,
Where Mars met full in the shifting air
The horror of alien space.

But mute in the roar of the Midland pumps
We watched the floods and the foam-bells
leap
To the Krône Canal from the Polar Way,
In moonlit splendors of silver spray
That glimmered and dripped from the crim-
son clumps
Of small sad shrubs by the waters' sweep.

And gold was aglow in your eyes, my queen,
As gold was agleam in your hair.
Your white hands clung to my crusted helm,
Your white throat sobbed for your ravaged
Realm,



And—two wild words and a kiss between—
I fled, and left you there.

You watched by the brink of the Thorian
Lake

The vultures gape and gorge.

And there you swore, where I died for you,
Your soul more true than the stars are true,
Such vows as the years nor the light-years
shake . . .

So why did you marry George?



IN THE ARMY OF ANTHONY
He

I DIE tomorrow,
And you shall be
A white-lipped sorrow
Beyond the sea.

I die tomorrow,
O heart of love,
That these may borrow
A part of love—

For more than duty
Is this we do.
We die for beauty;
I die for you—

In thus wild manner
Allegiance hold
To more than banner
Or Eagle-gold;

To more than warning
Of cold commands—
To rose-crowned morning,
And clinging hands!

We die tomorrow
That this shall be
A great-souled sorrow
Eternally.

She

Octavia's lips in Rome are white
Tonight,



Octavia's widow heart forlorn
And torn;

You die tomorrow,
And we shall be
A white-lipped sorrow
This side the sea . .

Ah—Gods we cannot understand
Command.

FOR VIRGINIA

NIght, and the brief lamps passing;
Lights; and the warm air flowing;
Starshine, and shadows massing;
Dim thoughts glowing;
And you, unknowing.

Moment and moment fleeting,
Magic and one night flying;
Loneliness, now, completing
Visions that you left lying,
Here, in my heart, undying.

Moonlight and mists and the mountains
pass,
And star light smooth on the sun-worn
grass.
This never will pass.



COMMUTING

Morning

THE dawn is on the hills;
The east is drenched with day
Like golden wine that spills
Its glow across the gray.
The trembling morning thrills
To our rush along the way.

The eastward hill-tops loom
Their crumpled crests on high,
A mass of purple gloom
Against an orange sky.
The frosty metals boom.
The dawn is roaring by.

The world is gold and gray,
But wet and sunless green
On hurtling straightaway
And clanging curve's careen
The whipping willows sway
To meet our rush between.

A fleeting shadow whirls
Thru faded fields forlorn;
A swimming vista swirls
Down rolling ranks of corn.
The mountain thunder hurls
Our wheels to race the morn.

Evening

The dark'ning westward glows
Against a darker sky
With feeble wisps of rose
And purple gold that die.

The chill gray gloaming goes.
The night is storming by.

The bitted storms we tame
Are roused to rage the more
In floods of emerald flame
That foam above the roar,
The glare that puts to shame
The thunder-bolts of Thor!

The shimmering vistas flash
And fade before my face.
The lightnings lunge and lash
The shadows into place.
The rocking rotors crash
Their heavy headlong race.

The night winds whistling clear,
The sky-line circling slow;
The darkness dazed and drear
Where the fleeing shadows flow;
The reeling tree-tops near,
The roaring rails below!

The last rose gleam is gone,
The last faint light is fled.
One vast forsaken lawn
The gray dark flats are spread.
The lightning plunges on
Thru spaces spurned and dead.

The current leaps and flares
In crisp and crackling chrome.
A quivering greenness glares
Across the pallid loam . . .
The bidden thunder bears
Me home.



SIGNAL HILL

DERRICK shadows loom against the night,
Soaring—roaring—pouring
Gouts of oily gloom and grimy light.

Shades emerge and skulk, in aimless toil,
Clanging, banging—hanging
High above the hulk, or delved in oil.
Stalking shadow stamps and shudders back,
Clanking, cranking planking,
Lit with sickly lamps and greasy black.

Straining boilers burst their valves and hurl
Streaming, screaming, gleaming
Scimitars accurst of pillared pearl.

Liquid shadows blot the pipes that flow—
Humming, drumming, coming
Still and swift and hot, a mile below.

Men have thrust a knife, that stabs and stuns
Droning, moaning, groaning
Earth, who bleeds her life for these, her sons.





RESTITUTION

THO music is mute to me, and the
 viol's deep sighing
 Unmeaning and dumb;
Tho the song of the flute to me, and
 the trumpets' crying,
 Inarticulate come,
Yet restitute to me are the sun's great
 dying,
 And the night winds numb,
The fearful and futile sea, and the fierce
 foam flying
 Till the stars succumb;
And man, immutably, unfrighted, defying;
 And the brave war drum;
And lips refuting ye, and hearts denying.
 And the eyes that plumb.
For thus must beauty be for my descrying,
 And these are some
That, restitute to me, in my deep heart
 lying,
 In the twilight come.
But music is mute to me, and the trumpets'
 crying
 Unmeaning and dumb.



MONOTONE

WHAT lies, I wonder, deep down, under
The reticent roots of the grass,
Where sunlight nor thunder shall
mark asunder
The limitless years that pass?

The year is dying. Wan leaves are flying.
All gray is the summerless season,
As tho for token the sun has broken
The heart of the earth with treason

And left forsaken whose lips had taken
The spring from his lips of light.
His ringlets shaken shall never waken
The sleep that she sleeps tonight.

The day dies dreary beyond the weary
Indefinite wastes of the west.
The morning merely illumines more clearly
A world without passion or rest;

A world without weeping, or laughter, or
sleeping—
A saddened succession of trances,
Of pale winds creeping, of lorn leaves leap-
ing
In hueless and horrible dances.

The gray streets glimmer; and darker, dim-
mer,
In tired towers, vacant of pity,
Their sick slaves fashion with hands grown
ashen
A shroud to encircle the city.



The gray clouds cover the hills, and hover,
A curse on the cold clean air.
And lover by lover, the dumb clods cover
The young and the wise and the fair.

What lies, I wonder, deep down, under
The pitiful roots of the grass,
Where sunlight nor thunder divide asunder
The desolate days that pass ?

IN ORDER

A MILLION years the morning set the eastern sky aflame
With fairy streams and flaring pools of rose and gold,
And whorls of liquid light and tingling tints without a name,
As tho seraphic standards there above the angels rolled.
Tonight, the last of endless evenings will the earth reclaim
And cloak the hills with patient purple, fold on fold.
A billion suns had blazed and burned away before you came
To make this miracle of music, and to mold
Of all the joyous universe a frame
Unto thy loveliness, Isolde.



SUMMA

THE sadness of summer sleeping
Aslant of the yellow lands,
The long, warm shadows creeping;
And slowly, over the sands,
The sea's warm, quiet weeping;
The warm wind on my hands.

The dry, wan grass-tops driving
Adrift in the westwind's breath,
The purposeful April's thriving
Hath ripened and scattereth,
And this is the end of striving,
The harvest; and this is death.



BEAUTY

I KNOW that beauty only is the bestial
brand
Imprinted on our hearts when belly-
hunger smote us, or the spring—
That beauty has no sacred message that the
seraphs understand,
But only mocking lure and laughter that
the brutal past may fling;

That beauty once meant marrow bones and
drenching blood
And auroch's dying bellow;
That beauty once meant cubs and food
And honey dripping yellow,
And now is meaningless
To ban or bless.

(Summer evening hazy blue along the walnut-wooded hills!)

I know it is a homeless, hungry flame
That burns along the hills of barren amber-
dun,
The sunset-colored summits lit with blue
and molten gold;
(Sudden dancing dust-clouds in the sun!)
That smokes beneath the canyon scent of
sleepy sycamores,
That flickers where the poplars glimmer,
white and green,
Above a weary, level land.

This beauty—all the angel in our hearts—
*(Sunlight on the bladed green, and waves and
caves of corn!)*

Is false, unmeaning, purposeless;
And I am sick with scorn.
But while I live, my soul can only say
With other delving fools that waste and
wear away their youth
That Beauty is the meaning, Beauty is the
purpose, Beauty is the Truth.

*So beauty is screaming of apes at the feast,
An urge and a gleaming whose purpose has
ceased,
But better its seeming than horror, at least,
And living is dreaming and man is a beast!*



W. J. B.

An Experiment in Extravagant Rhyme

YOU moan your rage. What star,
what sign
Has shown, O Sage, you are divine?

And God ashamed must see this prim
Poor clod that claimed to be like him?

I find such clinging fear as this
The kind of thing your spirit is:

In dread of death, disgust with life,
You sped each breath in dusty strife.

You built a Faith, and called it sweet—
A guilty wraith, a bald conceit

That bade you place yourself as lord
Of shady space and elfen sward,

And bleating call your hardened crew
To eat of all the garden grew,—

And grimmer feasts your marts have seen—
The timid beasts whose hearts are clean.

You made your God, empowered to rule
With blade and rod, a coward and fool.

You shaped a Law; you bought, betrayed,
And aped an awe of what you made!



You peer behind the veil of things
For fearless, kind, unfailing springs—

You faint and flee and cry and cringe;
Then paint with glee a lying fringe

About the garment of the Night;
Or shout of harmless Love and Light.

You grope in vain on ev'ry quest,
In hopeless pain, for heav'nly rest.

I find in clinging fear like this
The kind of thing your spirit is.

You moan your rage. What Star, what
Sign
Has shown you, Sage, you are divine?





THE MAN OF SORROWS

AND you have suffered, Christ, have suffered so?
I saw you blind among the blinded walk;
And all the wand'ring weariness of talk
And quest was gray upon your lips. . . I know.

Each inch you forced the shadows back, each slow
Small footstep on the restless search was fraught
With stunned and straining puzzlement—
each thought
A dull-drawn blade that gnawed your brain.
I know.

O brave and kind, I know the sudden hate
That whipped them from the temple court
and cursed
The barren tree; and why the tears
would flow;
The druggèd loneliness, the desperate
And groping grasp for truth that mocked,
the thirst
For good—till you were glad to die . .
I know.



ECCE HOMO

THEY did you wrong, a bitter wrong,
 O sad great son of man,
And all their song was silly song,
 And all their legends ran
To cloak with flowers those dreadful hours,
 Those paths that you have trod;
To make your glory a children's story
 And you a ghastly God.

The sad sea sleeps within her shores.
 The desert mountains dream.
The wild, unwaited rain-storm pours,
 The same still headlands gleam.

But powers have risen, empires passed,
 Have bowed and bent the knee,
While prince and pope adored aghast
 A monkish mummary.

The red blood blurred the thirsty blade,
 The white fire ringed them round,
Whom frightened zealots racked and slayed
 To prove you Christ and crowned.

The Prince of Peace is armed with rods
 And served with smoking sword.
The Son of Man who scorned the gods
 Is hailed as God and Lord.

There were no angel wings around you in
 the shade,
In your green gloom-engirdled garden and
 the night,

Gethsemane, and that long evening when
you prayed
To your own soul and crowned your own
sad brows with light.

But ghosts of tortured men and wraiths of
men who died,
And dizzy, drifting dreams of woe as yet
to be,
And impotence and hate were sentries by
your side.
You stirred your dusty hair and raised
your white face free.

No devil voices tempted you. No foolish
fiend
Had part in that numb pain when twilight
let you see
What thoughtless day and strident noon had
almost screened,
The fundamental fear, the vast Futility.

All night you strove to build on nothing-
ness; to plan
In blood, in sweat and tears, in utter pain
to give
A promise and a hope, a pledge of peace, to
man,
A brotherhood, a Reason and a Right to
live.

O man, O more than God, O brave and des-
olate!
If you had known when that white morn-
ing shook the palm

That this great gesture in the foolish face
of fate

Would throne you as a God, would you
have grown so calm?

For gods will always die. But you have
built a stone

In man's frail walls that keep out chaos
and the night,

Have flung your body in the bulwark's gap,
alone

To face the dark, defend our fiction of
the Right.

It were no bravery for God to fall, and rise
So soon from death, with ordered heavens
waiting him—

But you were man, defying void, sardonic
skies,

Your banners on the last Frontier, on
Chaos rim.

And we await in weakness one far day,
when hearts afire

Shall wake to realization, the anthems and
the organs roar,

The world's wide temples ring and rock to
man's terrestrial choir—

"*Ecce homo, filius hominis, hominum salvator!*"



DILEMMA

IF wretchedness and poverty must
hurt me
And sights of sordid sorrow wring
my heart,
The joyousness of riches should divert me,
And careless beauty bid my laughter start.

But cloth of gold and proud, repulsing pal-
aces,
And mirth and music stir my angry pain.
Elusive acid, strange beyond analyses,
In beauty, is corroding all my brain.

There is no peace on earth for such as me
While tragedy and beauty dwell apart
And mirthfulness and men are separate.
The sodden sordid woes I ache to see,
The beauty and the strength that break
my heart,
Are one in ceaseless and the self-same
Hate.



SONG IN TIME OF DISORDER

O KINGS of the earth, the world is
alight
With the flaming of fresh desires,
A gleam that is neither of day nor
of night
Nor the glow of the altar fires!

O Lords of the earth, the world is astir,
And a storm from the hearts of men
Has swept the seas where your galleys were.
There never are slaves again.

O Lords of the treasures from under the
earth
That ye win by the workers' hands,
And what are the gold and the parchments
worth,
Or the gleam of your jewelled bands?

When the sinews serve but the inward light
That now have served your gold
What power will be in the gilded might
That bought ye power of old?

Two things there are in this lonely star,
Two things beneath the sky:
The toil men give whereby we live,
The dreams wherfore we die.

And what is the strength in a sceptre's length
And what in a diadem—
Or what have ye in your treasury
To give ye glut of them?

And what is the good of your golden hoard,
Your tokens of tinsel and gilt?
For these are the hands that have held the
sword,
And these are the brains that built!

And these are the bodies ye bought with
gold—
But what if ye cannot buy?
And why should they barter whose hands
can hold
The earth and the sea and the sky!





WHO ARE THE STRONG ?

An interested query addressed to certain pseudo-scientific sociologists who pretend to see in the inequalities of society the inevitable manifestation of the laws of organic evolution —the survival of the fittest, the “Nemesis of the weak,”—catch words which they have snatched from the frothy puddle of current “culture.”

WHO are the Strong ?
The coarse cry storms along
The shattered walls and shakes the citadel.

Who are the Strong ?
A wailing of want and wrong,
And the hate of the fiends of Hell—

Who are the strong ?
A sobbing of terrible song
Affrights ye where ye dwell !

O ye that have shamed our sages,
Who perjure the printed pages
For proof that the awful ages
Have hallowed your right to rule,
Who preen yourselves, and prattle,
Think ye that the cosmic battle
Has crownèd such Christless cattle
And thronèd the filching fool ?

For ye they read the record of the stones,
And men have starved and shamed themselves for this—

That ye should mark complacently these
moans,
The pain that builds the bulwarks of your
bliss ?

For this they reft the secret from the rocks,
The battle with the beast that made us men,
That ye should claim this privilege of the
fox

And snarl above your booty in your den ?

The implacable fulfillment of the Law
Ye warp in little minds that would confute
The prayers and songs that held the earth
in awe,
The Dream that made us dreader than the
brute,

That ye may seek to scare the famished
throng
With garbled words of greater men, and
strive
To salve your spirits,—saying: “We are
strong.
“The weak must perish. Lo, the Strong
survive !”

But . . . “Who are the Strong ?”
The cold cry storms along
The weakened walls and shakes your citadel.

The purple pomp of empire for an hour,
And poor slaves crouching at a lance’s
length—
Ye deem it power ?



Ye call it strength?
Ye think that ye are "fit"
Because of it?

And pompous lords of lands and pond'rous
kings of gold,
For this was all the striving? For this the
æons rolled,
To shape your fattened faces from the clean
and honest mould?

Are ye the Triumph crowning all the cen-
turies?
For this our souls were sundered from the
slime?
The blind unanxious ages find in such as
these
Their masterpiece, and greet the Goal of
time?

So be it then,
O little men!

The beasts of the wilderness laugh,
And all the insensate earth
Will make your dominion as chaff,
As dust on the gales of her mirth!

The weak must die! ye cry;
And oh, but ye are weak, who seek,
With futile fortressing, to cling
A little space, unto the place
That ye have bought
With blood and lies and tears
And fraught
With fears.

Then pray your guideless stars and godless
skies
That these, who own the earth, may never
learn
This gospel of the jungle that ye prize
And wield that righteous rule to break and
burn!

For—who are the Strong?
The coarse cry storms along
The shattered walls and shakes the citadel.

For—they are the strong,
And the goods of the world belong
To them, by your own cold creed from Hell!

And lo, your little day is fading into night.
The weak that once ye ruled with wrath and
wrong
Are heirs to all your City, and rulers by
your Right—
And fifteen thousand thousand thousand
strong!



THE ALTRUIST

PERHAPS when youth is burned to rest,
A fragrant altar fire,
Whose leaping, fleeting gleams have blessed
My fingers on the lyre,
And I have drowned on woman's breast
The uttermost desire;

When I am surfeited of song,
And tired of tears that ran
With thankfulness to live and long
As each new day began,
I shall have tears to weep the wrong
That man doth unto man.

Ah, censure not then overmuch
That I seem sorrowless,
And sing of happy hands that touch
And laughing lips that bless.
My greatest gift were only such
Celestial Selfishness.

ON DIT QUE DIEU NOUS AIME

THEY say God loves, and yet
How can He, dear,
Whose eyes are never wet
For hope, or fear?

What pain can ever burn
That Heart above?
What anguish can He learn?
How can He love?

Must needs a little flame
Should drift and dart—
A little, prideful shame—
To love, sweetheart.





IN GRAY AND GOLD

A SHRINE stood far in a desert place,
All lovely white and fair.
(The hot dust clouds about my face,
The solitudes stretch bare)
And lo, that temple seemed to bless
My lonely life's sere wilderness.

O Thou who wast given of wonder,
E'en Thou who wast shapen of flame,
With glory about Thee and under,
All woven of dew-drops and thunder,
And gladness and glory and shame!

There is music that lies too deep, too deep,
More dear than the tongue can tell,
Than summery skies asleep, asleep,
Than summery buds aswell—
A prayer that sighs to keep, to keep,
And bless you, Isabel.

What can I give to you, dear,—
Beautiful, wonderful, wise,—
What can I bring to you here,
Worthy your eyes?

—your eyes.

(Our own far hills in their own fair haze—
And gray dim storms on the dim green sea;

The stormy glory of April days,
And sunlit spaces all fair and free. . . .

And floating flakes of a golden brown,
As autumn leaves lie dim, adrift,
On forest pools where the sunlights drown
And gray-green shadows sleep and shift.)

"O God,"—and I stirred in my slumber—
"Oh, God, that I may not wake!"
(They moan in the dark without number,
The legion of hearts that break.)

The warm west wind is blowing
Over the bending grass,
And green and green are flowing
In waves that foam and pass,
That form in a jasper smother,
That pass in an emerald crest,
That gleam and give way to another,
That shimmer and sink with the rest.

The sunlight splashes a splendor
Of softly blazing gems
Over the bowing, slender
Young ranks of the changing stems.

The morn has come to me with the sunlight
on the sea,
The clouds are climbing slow across the
sky,
And Death has whispered near—Ah, God, if
I could hear—
How beautiful a thing it is to die!



LAUS VERIS

THE dusk upon the mountains, and the canyons stretching bare;
The lonely levels rolling to the sunset's golden glare,
And the blessed smell of wood-smoke upon the even air—

The music of the morning and the soft and sudden glow
That turns to gold and glory on the eager earth below,
The warm and happy ocean and the wavelets laughing slow;

The hum and hush of noonday on the beauty of the hills,
The sea of silent sunlight and the scent of earth that fills
The little lovely hollows that a breathless whisper thrills,

A whisper of the wonder of the green and growing things
Where the golden violets tremble and the mossy carpet clings—
And the brooding warmth above them like the hovering of wings.

Oh, the glory of the Open and the summits sweeping free!
And the Valley's vastness drooping like a flaming tapestry
From the splendor of the mountains to the splendor of the sea!

And oh, the purple fragrance of the daylight
dying slow,
The mist of mauve and lavender—the vague
and violet glow—
The sunset's faded orange and the darkling
blue below!

And lo, the scented shadows and the sun-
light shining thru,
The darkness and the dawning, and the pain
that leaps anew,
The beauty and the wonder—and the agony
—are you.

Oh, God! Is there no beauty save the Beauty
bought with pain?
And must I pay in anguish for each splash
of poppy stain
That lies in yellow lakelets on the greenness
of the plain?





THE LOST LEGION

O WORDS that once have marched
with me,

O Comrades staunch and true,
Yet once again, ere it cannot be,
I come to the wars with you.

The day was once, O Comrades mine,
Our trumpets hailed the dawn,
And rank on rank, in glittering line,
Your eager swords were drawn,

A hundred thousand points of light,
A million swords of sound,
To hew a path thru the trackless night
Where the dungeoned dreams were found.

Doomed to the dark we found them there,
The dumb iron chains on each,
And oped their eyes to the sunlit air
And touched their lips with speech;

Or, lanced with fire, and girded, helmed,
And armed with swords of light,
We bade the orchards bloom—or whelmed
An empire in her might!

Oh, once again your Legions roll—
Once more, and then we part.
My hands are weak on the banner pole
And sad and faint my heart.

No more our dreamland standards frown,
No more our ranks sweep by,

Or levelled lines go dashing down
The spaces of the sky.

The sword is rust I used to trust
And moulders in my hand.
My lips are weak that used to speak
The sudden, proud command.

The soul is dazed that once had raised
The war cry of the Night.
The Voice is blurred that once ye heard.
I cannot see aright.

I lay my wilted gauntlets down,
And—drops of silent shame—
I watch the shadows dull and drown
My sabre's brazen flame.

I lay our blemished banners by
Which we had borne before,
The sign of Her for whom we die
When we go forth to war;—

The sign of Her for whom we laid
A Realm within a star;
Or hung with sad celestial jade
Her still triumphal car.

Or, wrapt in blood or rapt in dreams,
We trod the ether ways
And decked her crown with golden gleams
Or burning stars ablaze.

(Be glad my heart has brought from hell
The flames to burn them clean.

Their shameful folds must never tell
The treason of our Queen.)

But well ye know the Standard's stain.
Henceforth your ways are free.
Ye must not march for Her again.
Ye cannot march with me.

The evening thrills the sunward hills,
And now the dusk is come—
The muffled beat of your soundless feet;
The roll of a muted drum.

Your trumpets fade on the dying day,
Your watchfires on the dark.
The dim last ranks are marched away.
The echoes die. . . But hark . . .

* * *

Our Queen was false; and yet, some day,
Beset by falser Lords,
Perhaps her saddened lips will say
The summons to our swords.

Perhaps a hurt will reach her heart,
A sorrow touch her Land . . .
Perhaps—oh, God—the veils will part
And we will understand!

Within the tent the Eagles shine
The weary years between—
Oh, bide ye well, O Soldiers mine,
The Service of the Queen!



A SUNDAY NIGHT

ONLY I know of the driving rain
That beats on the blurring glass;
And gleam, and gleam—again, again,
The lights that stream and pass.

Only I know of the smothered roar
That drums in the dark, outside;
The restless creak of the tossing floor,
The slap of the curtain-guide . . .

The rock and the drone of the rushing car,
The windows blind with rain.
(The drowned light quivers afar afar)
And I am blind with pain.



FREEHOLD

UT these you cannot give . . .

B The magic night beneath the mountain stars,
The little winds that stir
The dark dim forest loom that bars
The glittering sky with perfumed mass of fir;
The dusty scent of cedar; the murmuring of pine
Above the lonely breathing of the night;
The stifled snap of firelight coals that shine
With friendly flame, and crumble into white.
And you, my dear, a woman and a child,
Your little fist acrumple at your breast,
(While slow and far the starry armies filed
And rimmed with shifting gleams the distant crest)
And you, the blessing of your breath upon the air,
Your face, so human pure, and all divine;
The sleepy fringes of your friendly hair,
The little warmth of your hand in mine—
My heart that beat beside your heart
(So still—for fear you wake!) . . .

And tho they wrest our lives apart,
These things they cannot take.



VER VINDEX

THERE is no God. Of him I have not sought
For justice on the Thing that he has wrought.

In myriads my avengers wait. They gleam
Where serried poppies march in golden
hordes.

In April leaves their windy banners stream.
The grass shall be but swaying of their
swords.

The silver lances of the stars shall dart
Their keen unpassioned points across your
way.

The sunlit sweep of surf will sear your
heart
With white-hotplash of pain amid the spray.

Each flower that blooms beside your haunt-
ed path,

Each linnet's song, each lovely thing shall
be

A messenger of mute, unchanging wrath,
A march of my revengeful heraldry.



AFTERWARD

ONE little prayer to pray
I have today,
One thing to say
Before the gray
Has hidden all the gleams away,

One reason to be glad
Before this sad
Cold pain shall make me mad.

At least my soul is free
From one great agony
More dread than this can be,
One fear that stifled me,

One secret, speechless dread
That struck and stabbed and fled
And left our souls unwed,
My longing less secure—
Lest when the years were sped
And all was done and said
My restless love lie dead . . .
And yours endure.



THANKSGIVING

THEN God be thanked that this shall
be,

Whatever this may bring.

A wounded heart hurts mournfully,
And shame will always sting,
But this were kinder far for me
Than that false other thing.

So God be thanked, O selfish heart!

You will not know the worst,
For tho you bleed or break apart,
The while you thrill or thirst
And feel the old white anguish start,
You shall not be accurst.

You shall not know that viler woe,
Incredible and base.

You shall not feel fulfillment steal
Enchantment from embrace.

You shall not see uncaringly
The tear-drops on her face.

So God be thanked if this be true:

Theo hearts of men are strange,
Tho blither hearts undo and do,
And happier passions range,
The pain that froze and fettered you
Will never let you change!



SONG

I LOST a word; I lost a touch.
I miss her sudden smile.
I half forget
In pain, and yet
I know 'twas such
A wretched while.

She was a selfish shadow cast
By what I dreamed might be.
No shadow lies
Before my eyes.
My love at last
Will stay with me.

GHOSTS

MEN say there are ghosts, unsleeping,
Can rise from the dust and the dew
And wander the wide world, weeping,
And now I know it's true.

I knew that my heart was breaking.
My love was dead I knew.
But the wraith of a love is waking,
And the ghost of a heart, for you.



DORIS

THE steel-keen starlight melts for the moon.

The dim light drips to the canyon floors.

This is the sunland. This is June.

This is the silence of sycamores.

Others have wept. Their tears were light.

Their laughter was learned for this.

You bring better than tear-drops bright

And kinder than laughter is.

The white fires fade and the dreams are dust.

Desires and visions and laughter end.

You are otherwise. You I trust.

You are Doris. You are a friend.



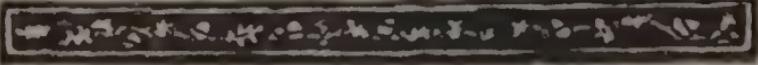


SOUVENIR

AN empty, half-familiar corridor
The earth is now; for some iconoclast
Has wrecked the world and left it
nothing more
Than poignant broken relics of a past.

Things have no longer meaning in themselves,
But eerie shapes, removed from use or touch,
Museum treasures ghostly on their shelves,
They hurt with memories. The world is such.

Half-worshipping I walk forsaken halls,
Half-scornful of the pain they bring. Men ask
Why I, with all their anxious phantom host,
Take not the weird tools from haunted walls
And scar the sculptured shadows with a task.
But I would rather die and be a ghost.



THE CANYON

THE crests of the cottonwoods quiver
 In the cleft of the hot ravine,
Their bright heart leaves ashiver,
 The cool white trunks between.
And the air is a warm, wan river
 With ripples of silver-green.

The hushed, hot hillside hovers,
 A dry, sweet droning of wings;
But here the kind oak covers
 And here the lithe vine clings
That laughed with the children lovers
 Since, oh, how many Springs!

The slow moss masses and mellows
 The prints of your little spade,
The sun on the clean boughs yellows
 The wounds that your dear hands made—
But the frail fern nods to her fellows,
 And peers at the path, afraid.

For the pitiful, rain-drenched embers
 Have whispered and now are dumb,
And the Aprils and still Septembers
 Have learned from the lone bees' hum.
Ah, the heart of the hills remembers
 That you—you will never come.

III.

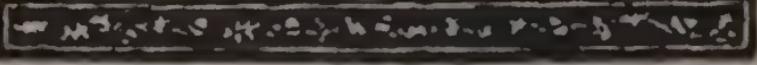
HERE BEGINS THE
THIRD PART
OF THESE RHYMES

τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῷ ἀνατολῇ

R h y m e s (iii)

FEBRUARY

O EARTH, my lover, my cold light
lover,
Whom I have worshipped with rapt
surmise,
What wayward treason has bid uncover
Your wild bright beauty to alien eyes ?
Your silver veils of the mist are parted.
Your heartbreak splendors are bold and
bare,
A shining lure to your shallow-hearted
Ephemeral lovers and debonair.
O earth, my lover, have you forgotten
That I was loyal ere I had seen
The young air dazed with the willow cotton
And white peaks dazzle beyond the green ?
For I was leal when your lips were sober,
Your heart-beats slow in the waning years,
And I kept faith in the gray October,
At hidden altars, with secret tears.
O earth, my lover, is their song louder
Than my poor singing that you denied,
For whom you laugh thru the windy powder
Of quick new snow on the mountain side ?
My lips were flushed and my breath beat
faster
For each poor token of rock or leaf—



More poignant pleasure and anguish vaster
Than earthly joy or mortal grief.

But who shall say—if our goddess squander
Arcane delights and miraculous things—
Which wastrel lover is briefly fonder
Of this blithe body and these bright wings ?



HYBRIS

I PRAY that the gods will pardon
My glorious discontent
With all of their April garden,
The gifts that the gods have sent.

The jewelled disguise is shallow.

The earth's is a sadder scheme
Than their device can hallow,
Or these bright things redeem.

But we might find us a magic,
If you would only try,
More wise and more true than the tragic
Old wizardries wrought by the sky,

And beckon the violets golden
And tremulous out of the sod,
Defiant and unbehoden
To them, or to any god



FRAGMENTS

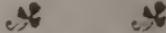
The Demi-Rebels

I CANNOT afford to be free,
Nor indulge in your lively de-
fiance.
Your bulwarks have vanished for me,
Who behold and despise your tacit reliance.



A Chorus

Steam and steel and screaming wheel,
Wings on the wind at dawn;
Wide and bright we ride tonight,
Sing; and our swords are drawn!



A warm sky burns—from azure urns
The summer swells and sways
In foaming, bright, young chrysolite
On floods of chrysoprase.



Stanislaus

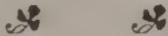
The hills are granite—gold—and grand—
And mightily the mountains stand—
But ah, they are such little things—beside
our Level Land!



The sea is broad and bright—and vain;
The sea is treacherous as rain . . .
The sea is such a shifting thing—but not
the Amber Plain!



“The land-locked stars above the Table in
the east
Gleam yet; the Cross swings there, de-
cisively,
But here, beneath the Cape, the stars have
ceased,
And dark seas chant, derisively.”



Weltanschauung

One cannot know who only sees
The gray smoke in his eyes,
The red strife swirl around his knees,
And selfish battle cries.

One cannot know who fights or falls.
One must be throned afar—
One better knows from garden walls
What kind of wars they are!



MISERERE

GRIEFS may be that the bright to-
 mornings
Will find forgot.
Sorrows there are that are singing
 sorrows,
But this is not.

Pain there is that is mine, and lonely,
That songs refute.
This is you, and is sorrow only,
And this is mute.

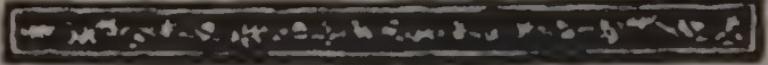
Brave with the beauty that grief can borrow
My heart endures
Deep long draughts of its own wild sorrow ..
But this is yours.



ILLE TRIUMPHANS

MY dear . . . he shall not come unheralded and darkling.
Be glad no easy symbols say what we would say.
Let me remember, dear, his splendid pathway, sparkling
With all the precious pangs I hoarded for this day.

Why, I would rather die than he should find me sleeping,
Forgetful and afraid, scarce knowing when he came.
But, keen and quick and waitful, royal vigil keeping,
Be glad if I who greet him light the gates with flame!



TRANSLATIONS

The Faun

DIODORUS never molded
This wild thing, but only folded
Him in bright enchantments, keeping
All his grace in silver sleeping.

Lest the shining spell be shaken,
'Touch him not—or he will waken!
—Plato.



Tycho

Tho I am God of Little Things, and ye
must ask
No mighty miracles of me, nor magic
splendor,
Yet men may pray to Tycho 'mid the com-
mon task
For all the aid that such a little god can
render.
—Addæus.

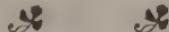


'A Lovely Maiden Aunt'

Aloft, alone, on one far bough,
A fair, last apple lingers.
The husbandmen may laugh and lie
And say they willing passed it by—
For they would hardly tell you how
It hung beyond their fingers!
—Sappho.

Make you a garland, Dica. Wind it
 Thus, for those lovely curls to wear—
 Of dill-stalks twisted
 By your soft-fisted
Fingers clenched in their gold, and bind it,
 Dica, around your hair.

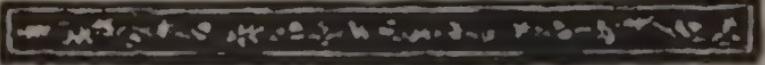
No matter how pious at prayer you are,
No sober old goddess has yet unbent;
But they, when they see you how fair you
are,
May look on you, love you, laugh, and re-
lent. —Sappho.



Via Cognita

One road at least thou canst not miss.
One pathway needs no mark.
Ah, thou canst hardly stray from this
Sure highway to the dark.

Then boldly go where all have gone.
Thy feet are sure to find
That broad same slope, and straight, whereon
The blind may lead the blind.
—Leonidas.



DIXIT MAGISTER

BUT I would not my paltry wounds
were vaunted so,
Or Calvary, before these friendly
faces.

For ye are men and women; ye must know
Of pains more dread than these, and
grimmer places,
That well-intended horrors hardly show,
Or urgent, strange, devotional grimaces.

Do mine insistent faithful celebrate that
work
As such a fleshly catalog of slaughter,
Commemorate a whimper in the murk.
A crown of thorns, a cup of bitter water?

Those stale forgotten wounds that marred
that moment's clay
Are faded wrongs beside our graver bur-
dens,
And there have been more bloody hurts
than they,
Endured in quietness, for lesser guerdons.

Think not of me that I would barter pain
for pity,
Such facile woes for juvenile compassion,
Who bear an elder Cross for this our City,
As patiently, and in another fashion.



And these, my friendly people, well I know
that ye
For many loves would tear your flesh in
sunder.

To such I make no futile, mystic plea,
O lords of air, and masters of the thun-
der!

But will ye face the scornful dark with me,
The emptiness and weariness of wonder?



THE POET

BECAUSE I have chosen the magic way
And ridden the music road;
Because I have sung at the break
of day
And dreamed when the evening glowed;

Because I am blind to the instant need
And dumb in the market place;
Because I am sick when the people bleed,
And sob for a tortured face;

Because I am not as the others are
And builded of brawn and bone,
But born of the mist and the morning star
And nursed in the night, alone;

Because I have fought to the last frontier,
And face to the endless dark
Have visioned the first and the furthest fear,
The infinite, empty arc—

The circle of night where a dream is naught
And men are as less than dreams,
Till faith and the facts that our fathers
taught,
The laws that they loved and the things
they thought,
Are frozen and futile themes,

Till kingdoms of gods are as motes that go,
Till stars are a drift of chaff,
With none that may laugh at the witless
show
But Chaos, that cannot laugh;



Because I have flaunted before the night
The banner of earth and men,
And faint from the far, defiant fight
Have won to the world again;

Because of the dreams and the tears that
ran,
The sobs and the singing breath,
My twofold gift is the scorn of man,—
And this, my hope, is death.



LA BREA

THE hills are older. I have seen
Still centuries of stone and rime.
But here no granite veils can screen
The mere massed majesty of time.

For this was life, and these were kin,
And that was foretaste of our tears;
And they had borne our burdens in
Unmusical and sombre years.

And all our wizardries of steam,
Our haughty tunes and towers are vain,
Unless some grandeur can redeem
That profligate and futile pain.

Our world shall grave their songless strife
In temples vaster than the sky,
To be their cenotaph,—or Life
Is all a blunder and a lie.



CREDO

ICAN be kind
Altho I know
The gods are blind
And planets go
Untended, lost,
On chartless gyres
Of lifeless frost
And lawless fires.

I can be kind
Altho I see
A stumbling, blind
Infinity,
Where stars, unsteered,
Will stagger, dumb,
While worlds are cleared
And systems come,
And sterile change
Unceasing roll
An aimless range
Without a goal,
And trace the mad
Same symbol back,
The circle's sad
Enclosed track.

One might be kind
Altho he heard
That once the blind
Inchoate stirred
By accidents
And careless spate
Of elements
Informulate



For change and chance
To shape and scar
And death enhance
To what we are.

I can be kind
Altho I know
The clanging, blind,
Eternal snow
Will swell from out
The dark at length
In undevout
Indifferent strength,
And each by each
Our passions fold
In tranquil reach
Of level cold.



THE WATCH

THE blind seas break against our homeless prow . . .
The little folk are sleeping, berth by berth,
Or move with fretful moans and slumbrous mirth.
We restless tread the dreary decks, and bow
To empty gales, who serve the ancient vow.
The dark winds shake the shrouds; their salty dearth
Is dried upon our doubtful lips. What worth
Are vigils down the vacant waves we plow?
The Deep is void before; and what comes after
The cold high glory of the Watch we keep?
Our eyes are blurred from questioning the night;
Our bitter lips forget the taste of laughter.
They sleep, then, wisely, smiling in their sleep;—
We have not found a Port, nor any light.



MAGUS

I COULD not see the fairy things
Altho I fought my way
With weary heart and wounded wings
Beyond the realms of day.

I cannot see the little dreams
That dance around the fire.
My soul is sick with vaster themes
And deadlier desire.

I cannot see the friendly sprites
That tumble in the smoke.
My brain is blind from glaring heights,
And stunned with lightning stroke.

Ah, lovely must their visions seem
Who only sit and play
With rosy gleam and fairy dream
And tenderness and Fey!

I cannot know because my ears
Are muffled with the moan,
Because my eyes are blind with tears,
That other men have known.

Ah, God—the splendor in your eyes,
The music on your lips . . .
But I have been where vision dies
And strangling darkness grips.

I pray that you may pray for me,
O curving lips, and kind—
But not to be as you must be,
And blind as you are blind,



For I would know that you are thus:
 Immutable, remote,
Your heart that could not war with us,
 Nor care wherefore we smote;

Above the battle where we ride,
 And Day that follows after—
A surf of song when we have died,
 And drifting dust of laughter.



MA DONNA

IMEDIATE and vast,
The last
Great Angel stood within your gar-
den-close.
A still Annunciation stirred the air,
But you were bowed above a rose,
Untroubled there,
And singing, with the sunlight on your
hair.
You did not care. . .

The Angel smiled, a grave, great smile,
And sheathed his silent sword, and left you
so.
And you may wonder lightly for a while,
But you will hardly know.



RESPITE

AND these are the singing days
Ere the days are dumb,
And these are the pleasant ways
Ere the long night come.

I know of the dreams that cease
And the hate that stays,
But this is a little peace
Before those days.

And this is a magic time,
And a music love,
And a dimness, a drift of rhyme,
In the stars above.

For gardens I knew not of
Where such flowers blow
Have sent me a fairy love
Until I—know.



QUID ADORAT DIVINITAS

WHAT do you think when the slow
light changes,
Smothered in sunset, gold and gray,
Purple mists and the seaward ranges—
What do you say?

What is the purpose of all October,
Night, and the mountains moon-washed
clean,
Tarnished silver, and shadow-sober . . .
What do they mean?

Morning to me is your clear eyes shining;
You are abroad on the sunbright hill.
What in morning can your divining
Discover still?



TRESPASS

SING to them frail music. I shall listen.
Let them laugh a little space, and
kiss you.
I have won another crown, where
gentler jewels glisten.
Never waste a thought for me, nor dream
that I shall miss you.

.

Breathless little footsteps in the tingling
water,
Sudden magic dewdrops on your feet—
Ere our ocean's goddess claim you for her
daughter,
Laugh, and dry you quickly—oh, be fleet!

A flash of flying droplets starts and stipbles,
Mars the mystic flood with little waves and
warm . . .
It were hardly fair that you should stir
our ripples—
You, who never dreamed to face our storm.



AMBUSCADE

I COULD not believe that I would be
so foolish.
One cannot remember
Mocking clouds will come again, and
ghoulish
Little grasses—in November.

I had near forgot that quiet
Silver pennons of the rain would waver
Thus, or clouds in bright battalions break
and riot,
Swept with sunset's battle-flame, and clear
wind-trumpets quaver.

I would not have wished to be so silly.
I remembered not that earth would be like
yonder
Glowing thing; or dawning like a tiger-
lily,—
Orange-gold and purple-black—and fragile
tints that day will squander.

I would hardly ask to be forgiven.
I am not repentent. I am only
Pleased with this my pain, and sorry I
have striven,
Numb my heart lest this should be . . I
was lonely.



You are just a woman-child—yes, you are
pretty
Let me say my secret then—for you are
clever;
Lest it end in bitterness, my laughter for
your pity,
Hush, and let me tell you. This is not
forever.



BRONZE AND BLUE

Beata

L COULD not know that this would be
A loveliness.
How should my heart have known
that she
Could gently bless
That ancient, lyric hurt for me—
How could I guess?



Weave for them frail music from your
morning,
Quaint little mischief words adorning
Web of woman-thoughts; the warp of girl-
ish wonder,
And weft of faith and Faerie, under. . .



*(I would not really wander
Amid your marvels yonder.
I am not truly fonder
Of you than of—my soul.)*



For this, for this the roses grew,
Lilies and violets, gold and blue,
While quiet Aprils have gleamed and passed—
For careless fingers to rend at last?



For this, for this the angels bent,
Happy and anxious and proud, and lent
Their golden glories to light her hair,
And Mary's magic to make her fair?

For this the spirits that throng the night
And fairies that dance in the drowsy light,
And goddesses glad in the salt sea spray,
Their blitheness and beauty have cast away!

But I were . . . lonely
Forever, rather
Than find this only
A flower to gather.



Your God bespoke you, dreaming,
And stirred your hair, and said
What sent the sunlight streaming
And where our dreams are fled—
He left the morning gleaming
In gold around your head.



*His Gifts He sealeth with His light,
That men acknowledge them:
Your fair brows crowned and bronzey-bright,
A spun-gold anadem.*



PRIVILEGE

SOMETIMES, when I have seen you,
swaying so,
A friendly miracle, with waiting
eyes,
Your young soul poised to meet some
bright surprise
With solemn song, it has been good to know

It is my right to find you where the slow
Green mist has veiled the sycamores, in
skies

Where silver-laughing meadow larks arise,
And your brave heart on that dark way I
go.

For I, if I have—loved you—singing so,
Your patient royalty, your songlit cheeks,
Have set me this tremendous task for
them.

Forgive me, or ignore me. You must know
Too far on tragic enterprise one seeks
To earn—such things—to ever ask
for them.



HAUTEUR

I AM too proud to still pretend
That this will be, and briefly end.

I am too proud to ever sing
Of this as light or little thing,

And far too proud to feebly hide
The shining shame that is my pride!

.

You are too great to only do
The pretty things your whole life thru,
. . . The magic that is you.

This is too great a thing to die
Between a girl's dissent, a woman's sigh,
To sanely live and gravely die—
The Vision that is you, and I.



ROUTE 1100

The Ventura Highway

THE level early bright warm light
Would waver down the hills, and rills
Of velvet shadows throng along
The dusky pools of oak, and cloak
The grassy younger green between;—
An ancient gloom aloft, and soft
New fragile flames aglow below;

And, miles and miles, an anxious breeze
Would stir the cloudy walnut trees.

The orchard aisles would lift and shift,
And plum-tree blossoms fall, down all
Those silent ranks of white young light;
The sudden furrows range and change,
And baby blades of corn adorn
The cool quick fields of brown, or crown
Their slopes with spire and spire of fire.

It might be thus, for you, I knew—
But if it still would be, for me,
I really never cared to see.



CREATRIX

WHAT magic lives in these your songs,
what wonder
In careless little rhymes you meant
for careless ears,
That, æons after you are hidden safely
under
The homely grass, a quaint compound of
dust and tears,
Because I loved their music I should let
them thunder
In long storms down the distant head-
lands of the years?

Your words shall move amid that infinite
contriving,
Upon those formless waters, and your
breath blown thru;
And when the heavy hurricane is starkly
riving
The cloudy, sterile shores to shape their
sands anew,
A little silver rain, a thin mist driving
Amid the solemn onslaught will be you.



COMMENCEMENT

ONLY pain is lovely.
This I know.
In sorrow, and half gladly,
I must go.

These shining dawns shall greet you,
other years,
Until one dusk shall tremble
thru your tears.

What Dream shall you leave homeless
on these hills
When these slow trumpets call you,
this hurt thrills?

But I am braver, knowing
that shall be
An echo and, almost,
a memory.



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